



## 2003 GOVERNOR'S POLLUTION PREVENTION AWARD

EXCELLENCE IN PROTECTING SOUTH CAROLINA'S ENVIRONMENT





## **SC DHEC BUREAU OF AIR QUALITY** COLUMBIA, S.C. **WINNER, STATE GOVERNMENT AGENCY**

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### **DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT**

The Bureau of Air Quality (BAQ) staff believes that an important part of supporting the overall goals for “cleaner air sooner” is to lead by example. Because mobile sources such as cars, trucks, and motorcycles are major contributors to air pollution, the BAQ planned a pilot project to determine the feasibility of encouraging its staff to use alternative options for commuting.

A workgroup comprising staff from the Divisions of Air Planning, Development, and Outreach, and Emissions, Modeling, and Support met to discuss the program. Eventually, the group outlined “Take a Break from the Exhaust” (TABFTE) and began to shape the specific aspects of the project. To gain insight and experience with initiating this type of project, DHEC decided to pilot TABFTE within the BAQ.

Supportive measures already in place for the project included the ability for staff to work alternative schedules, work flexible hours, and telecommute. The TABFTE project was developed with the idea of offering a variety of options for staff to participate in this project during the ground-level-ozone season.

The program also encouraged the use of mass transit, bicycling, walking, and other commuter options whenever practical. Offering a variety of alternatives for reducing vehicle use enabled the staff members to create the “best fit” for their job. A partnership with the South Carolina Energy Office was also created to assist with this effort.

### **TECHNOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The team developed a point system, combined with an electronic daily entry calendar, to assist in tracking the alternative commute options used. The staff was able to view both daily and monthly totals each day as they logged onto their computer to record actions taken on the previous day. Points were assigned to the various options based on the degree of action to be taken by an individual.

To gather information from the program participants for evaluation, the team relied on an electronic survey tool. This tool was sent out by e-mail to link staff members to a Web page where they could provide answers to questions concerning their commute to and from work.

### **ECONOMIC BENEFITS**

The economic benefits of the small-scale pilot project are difficult to estimate, but a conservative estimate in gasoline savings is \$3,500.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE**

As a result of the project, there was a greater than 8 percent reduction in air pollutants of concern as a result of vehicle miles not traveled. Specific pollutant reductions were approximately 172 pounds of NO<sub>x</sub>, 333 pounds of VOCs, and 2,626 pounds of CO. The project resulted in more than 1,300 round trips to Columbia avoided (not taken) through participation in the program. ●